

THE DAILY GAZETTE | Tuesday, July 18, 2017

HISTORY

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The Beech-Nut sign

The view of the village of Canajoharie was forever changed last week when the distinctive Beech-Nut

Edward Munger Jr. | February 4, 2013



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1 of 4 - The Beech-Nut letters are removed from the sign above the plant in Canajoharie. (Photo provided)

The view of the village of Canajoharie was forever changed last week when the distinctive Beech-Nut signs were removed from the facilities that once housed hundreds of jobs.

Officials weren't aware of anyone shedding tears over the loss of the signs that were highly visible from the New York State Thruway.

Since the signs were taken down, Mayor Francis Avery said he's heard "no reaction at all, really" from residents he's interacted with.

"They've accepted the fact that Beech-Nut has left

"They've accepted it and I haven't heard truthfull

The company transferred work, including production at a cereal plant in Fort Plain, to its new, \$124 million plant built 20 miles to the east in Montgomery County's Florida Business Park off state Route 55.

The company has been paying property tax since then and efforts to market the 800,000-square-foot facility have been ongoing.

Local businessman Ed Wells III said in an email Friday that various reasons led to the signs' removal.

"It was a combination of factors, including the deterioration because of age, the wild weather patterns over the last several months with the high winds," Wells said.

The highly visible Beech-Nut letters reaching above the massive white warehouse complicated efforts to find the new plant as well, he said.

"The sign was confusing to some of the customers traveling to the new facility in Florida. Beech-Nut wants to get as many customers and potential customers to the new facility to highlight its operations because it is so state of the art, LEED certified, etc.," Wells said in the email.

Wells said he was unsure if the signs were having any impact on efforts to sell the buildings. He said the economy likely has more impact on the marketability of the facility.

Montgomery County Economic Development Director Ken Rose on Friday said Pyramid Brokerage out of Syracuse was commissioned to try to sell the building a few months back and "several parties have gone through the facility" since then.

He said he couldn't comment further on any potential use, but said the warehousing portion of the site is the "most viable."

Avery said he's unaware of any imminent plans for the plant to be sold or re-used.

"To our knowledge there is no use for the buildings. We have heard nothing to indicate removal of the signs is a good omen," Avery said.

Montgomery County Historian Kelly Farquhar said she has not heard talk among historians about any desire to somehow obtain and preserve the signs.

The signs were seen as an identifier, indicating to travelers they were in Canajoharie, she said.

"To me there's always historic value" in pieces of local history, Farquhar said.

According to Wells, it's too late to save the signs anyway.

"Unfortunately, due to age and deterioration through the years, as they were taking the sign down, parts of it broke apart and as such it has been scrapped," Wells said.

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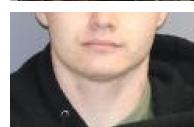
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